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HUNTING SNAILS.

It is a Hawaiian holiday. In a thousand valleys the dusky children of the tropics are playing. Theirs is an all-day-long festivity, and the young barbarians enjoy it to the utmost, in a land where, as in that of the poet's description, it seems always afternoon.

But it is not the native children alone to whom Saturday brings respite from the tasks of school. Let us in imagination alight upon the broad green slopes that lie between the mountains and the sea in the neighborhood of Honolulu. The whitewashed *adobe* walls of a seminary rise from the greensward. The building is arranged around three sides of two quadrangles. Palms, fig trees, and dates make shade around and within the courts. Groups of noisy lads scamper to and fro upon the play-ground, in front of the buildings, and you will be quite likely to see, far as you are from America, our "national game" of base-ball played upon the grounds. Look a little closer. You will observe that these students are fair and ruddy, as a parcel of boys let loose upon Eton or Harrow play-ground. No dark skins here, or suggestions of the Cannibal, but clear, Saxon faces, and genuine Saxon games. How has this little community of white youngsters been established so far from American soil?

This is the foreign High School of Honolulu.

These lads, who seem misplaced in this remote Polynesian country, are the children of American missionaries, and of other foreign residents in the Sandwich Islands. Thirty or forty of them are here gathered for schooling under good instructors; and here, on the edge of the tropics, they receive such an education in books, manners, and morals as the young people of our country receive in their higher academies.

An expedition to the mountains is on hand for to-day. Half a dozen of the stouter lads set off bright and early to climb the high mountains that lie behind the school. The land of romance lies near at hand to these young people. Within ten miles, or fifteen at farthest from their school, tower mountain heights that have seldom been scaled. The most adventurous may pause before endeavoring to climb these summits, that rise nearly as high as our White Mountains, yet reach no region of snows or ice, and are not visited by the hail. To their very peaks they are draped with foliage. Dense forests cover their flanks; entwining vines are interlaced among the gnarled trunks, so thickly as to make climbing almost impossible; and progress in many places can be made through the thicket only by carving one's way with hatchet, or with the *machete*. Vast ravines separate the mountains—gorges that are sometimes deeper than their breadth from summit to summit, and that admit only a brief hour's sunlight at mid-day; chasms all dank, and dripping with moisture, and whose rocky beds are covered by the dashing torrent of mountain streams. They remind one of the place in Coleridge's poem,

"Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man."

Close behind the walls of the Academy the hills begin to rise abruptly, and for a mile or more the road winds up a steep, grassy slope. This is in parts so smooth that youngsters may be seen sliding down hill upon sleds made for the purpose out of barrel staves, much as their American cousins go a-coasting in the winter. As our party rises, a glorious prospect opens to sight in the shore and sea that they are leaving behind. Three or four miles behind them the land-locked harbor of Honolulu appears crowded with shipping. Behind it a steep hill rises, on the crest of which a battery of a dozen guns is planted, and frowns threateningly on the Fort. Our climbers look down curiously into the hollow bottom of this old crater—an extinct volcanic cone. The foreigners called it "Punch Bowl," from its shape; and when our tourists are able to see the line of the horizon above its highest point, they know that they have made a start of five hundred feet up the mountain side. A broad panorama of verdant mountains extends on every side, with deep valleys radiating from the centre to the sea.

But this is only the beginning of the climb. The track winds ever upward, and soon plunges into the mountain forest. Dense groves of *kukui*, of *koa*, and of other native trees, shut in the prospect. But our travelers do not seem to care that they are cut off from one of the most beautiful views that the tropics can afford. The vast ocean horizon that seems to

rise into the sky, and rises still higher as they climb—the varied beauty of hill, plain, harbor, and city that lies below—all these are forgotten by the young climbers. They have come upon the mountain for a particular and engrossing purpose. That purpose is to gather tree-shells, or *achatinella*.

What are *achatinella*? They are beautifully colored shells that grow upon the bark and leaves of the forest trees. I hear an exclamation of surprise from some of the young conchologists who may be among my readers. "Do shells grow upon trees?" they say. "We shall be hearing next of strawberries growing in the sea; roses on thistles, or cats gathering honey!" Yes, it is even so, my critical readers. In these islands the trees have a great population of this sort; and some of them bear as many shells as fruits or flowers. They are inhabited by snails that wander over them, living upon the dews that gather upon them, and the juices that they distil. Many of them are very beautiful. Far aloft in the sunlight your eye will catch a rosy gleam—a spark of pure and brilliant color that waves to and fro, like a fairy star, with the motion of the boughs in the tropical breeze.

"It is a rosea!" cries one of the young naturalists, and forthwith he climbs the tree to secure the prize. On his way he will probably discover shells of other species, which he will transfer to his pocket. The number of shells, indeed, in each one of the commoner species is quite remarkable. In the more accessible valleys, a single, sharp-eyed, and active collector will gather hundreds in a day. But in the higher fastnesses of the mountains, the choicer varieties of shells are hidden away at the tops of the tallest trees, or lurk in the pendent festoons of vegetable drapery, that clothe the faces of dizzy cliffs, and are dashed with spray from mountain waterfalls. They are few in number, and not easily found; and to search for these rare shells gives a pleasure to the enthusiast almost like that which the gold-hunter, or the diamond-digger, experiences. Some of them are so beautiful in tint and contour, and are so highly prized by collectors, that they bear a money-value, and seeking for them becomes almost a mania with many of the island lads.

These shells belong, as I have said, to what is known as the genus *achatinella*, having a certain resemblance and common character which makes them a genus. They are a conical shell, a little like the ordinary snail shell; but they have an infinite variety of colored markings, some of which are extremely beautiful. Green, crimson, yellow, olive, and the peculiar flush of sunset skies may be seen in the smooth enamel of their surfaces. The colors are deep and durable; the shells may be called a sort of glorified snail shell. Some of their tints of green are especially tender and glowing, and can only be compared to the soft rich hues of oriental vases, or textile fabrics. This genus of shell is divided into two or three hundred species, and some of these species are again subdivided into varieties; so that it may be seen that our tourists will have enough to do before they can properly label and classify the spoils that they may gather in their rambles. They could have no better training for the faculties of observation and of memory, to say nothing of the scrambling and climbing which these shell-hunting tours afford them.

They soon learned some curious facts respecting the classification of these shells. There are several different islands on which they are found, and all the shells of each island have a peculiar look or physiognomy of their own—a sort of family likeness. Our young collectors came to recognize this fact so clearly that they can make some remarkable discriminations in the matter. Thus when they see a shell belonging to this genus, but to a species that they have never seen before, the shrewder ones tell at the first glance from what island it comes. They recognize the subtle family likeness that none of them could define in words—a likeness to other shells from the same island.

I think that this case comes near to being one of those in which we may have ideas or impressions that cannot be expressed in words.

More than this—not only shells from the same island revealed their distinctive family likeness, but our ramblers soon discovered that there was a yet subtler resemblance between shells that came from the same part of a given island. I remember seeing for the first time a beautiful shell of a species quite unknown to me. My companion asked me if I could tell where he had found it, and I was able to name the island without hesitation. After a moment's thought I also named correctly the part of the island

where the shell was found, mentioning the next valley to that which it inhabited, a spot not more than a mile distant from its home. Similar cases of the accurate placing of shells were of frequent occurrence among the young naturalists who climbed these mountain sides. One might suppose that they saw in these pretty tinted shells a real kinship, a physiognomy common to an entire group and indicating the relationship in the case of each newly discovered member. It seemed like the experience of a person who, having known a family of brothers and sisters, should recognize the family likeness in a stranger, and pronounce him at once to be of the same blood. Or if we deny that a common descent is sufficient to explain this likeness between adjacent species of the family of snails, we can easily believe that a community of food, soil and surroundings would produce the similarity in question.

But I must not make our holiday too scientific. Would that I could put on paper the charm of these mountain scrambles! A few hours' climbing took our young shell-hunters quite out of the warm atmosphere of the sea level, and brought them into a climate where they dreamed of the temperate zones that they had never seen, and heartily wished that they could climb high enough to get into the region of snow and ice. On one of the islands, indeed, an inaccessible domain of cold was full in sight each day—the summit of higher mountains than those which they scaled on their afternoon rambles. There they saw a distant realm of winter that was more alluring to their imagination than anything that fairy stories describe. Of winter they had tantalizing descriptions by their parents, who had come from cold countries. But these children born in the tropics would have thought it a greater pleasure to touch and handle snow than to ramble in orange groves, or to see a hundred volcanoes.

Sometimes their rambles were much too adventurous for safety. On one occasion a party of three boys set out, as usual, without any guide, to scale the highest summit of West Main. This island is the second largest of the Hawaiian group, and the summit upon which they wish to stand is about six thousand feet above the sea. They started at dawn and were soon far above the sea level; they looked down upon the clouds and upon islands that seemed to lie upon the water a hundred miles away. But as they ascended the path became exceedingly difficult. They had to climb giddy precipices, to follow sharp ridges that descended into frightful chasms on either hand, into which a single misstep would have plunged them headlong. Ignorant of the laws of physical force, and how to use it economically, they pushed on much faster than their strength would bear. They attacked almost furiously the obstacles in their path, and their strength thus lavishly spent soon began to fail. One of their party, who, for several weeks had been trying the experiment of Grahamite diet, had considerably reduced his powers of endurance. Before reaching the summit he sank exhausted upon the ground. His companions tried in vain to rally and support him. They had no stimulants at hand, and hardly any food. Finding that their companion could not proceed they gave up the idea of trying to reach the top of the mountain. How they should get down from it was now a serious question. Thoroughly frightened, the two lads, who were still able to march, endeavored to help the third to retrace the difficult steps by which they had ascended. But it was of no avail. The poor fellow, after making a few efforts to walk, sank again fainting upon the ground. One of his companions remained at his side, while the other hastened down the mountain to procure aid. The road was long and difficult, and it was several hours before the messenger returned. When at last a company of native youths appeared after nightfall in the lonely glen, where my friend was laid, they found him dying. They raised him at once, and bore him down the mountain, but he did not live to reach his home. His death checked for awhile the violent rivalry among the island youngsters to see who could climb the highest among the Hawaiian mountains. But it did not diminish the ardor of the shell hunters in their favorite pursuit. To-day, as of yore, every bright Saturday afternoon sees them climbing lightly among the Hawaiian hills.

— T. M. Coan.

HEAD AND HEART.—The heart of man is older than his head. The first-born is sensitive, but blind; his younger brother has a cold but all-comprehending glance. The blind must consent to be led by the clear-sighted if he would avoid falling.—Ziegler.